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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

25X1 [REDACTED]

COUNTRY Poland

DATE DISTR. 15 Oct 1954

SUBJECT 1. Political and Economic Information
2. Reduction in Armaments Production Targets
3. Popular Attitudes

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Radio Listening

- 25X1 1. [REDACTED] listened to the BBC German-language news broadcasts almost every evening at home in Breslau until the spring of 1954, when jamming became so troublesome that he gave up trying to get the broadcasts regularly. He used to listen to VOA and RFE broadcasts occasionally, though not as often as to the BBC, as he was mainly interested in news, and the BBC transmissions gave him as much news as he had time to hear. He had no comment to make about individual programs, beyond the remark that all of the foreign stations should try to give as much news as possible bearing on Poland. It was his impression that jamming of Western broadcasts had increased very sharply in the spring of 1954. Before that time it had usually been possible to receive BBC, VOA and RFE broadcasts without too much trouble, and to listen to West German, Austrian, and Swiss German-language broadcasts almost without interference. By the summer of 1954, however, all foreign stations broadcasting in German or Polish were very strongly jammed, so that people were beginning to give up trying to follow foreign stations regularly. He said that reception was generally best in the middle-wave band and suggested that it might be possible to combat jamming on short-wave by continually moving the signal from side to side on the wave band. The listeners who tuned in on short-wave usually kept their hands on the dials anyway and would be able to follow the signal easily enough, while the jamming stations would probably be slower in keeping on the same frequency as the Western station.

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Comment on Berlin and Geneva Conferences

2. [] people in Poland were not very interested in the Berlin and Geneva Conferences, as hardly anyone expected that the conferences would produce any results satisfactory to themselves or the West generally. People have long ago given up hoping that the Russians would ever give up any position they now hold except through defeat in a world war. People accepted the official view that the settlement of the war in Indochina was a victory for the Communists. Everyone was convinced that the Communists would renew the fighting at a later time more favorable to themselves.

Attitudes toward the USSR

3. []
[] the present government in Moscow was as strong as in the time of STALIN. The organization of the Party guaranteed that there would always be a dictatorship in the Soviet Union. It didn't matter who was dictator, as the Communist system itself would survive regardless of who was at the top. No one man could hope to challenge the system, as was shown by the elimination of BERIA. Source agreed that there might be rivalries among the Communist leaders, but doubted if they would affect the Soviet Union's power position in the world. He did not know that KHRUSHCHEV had replaced MALENKOV as Party Secretary. He felt that people in the West placed far too much hope in the possibility that domestic discord might cripple the power of the USSR.

4. [] people in Poland generally, were greatly oppressed by a sense of the enormous power and strength of the USSR. People took it for granted that the Soviet Union was now so strong -- had so many jet planes, tanks, trained and loyal soldiers, and so on -- that it could scarcely be completely defeated in a war. The best which could be hoped for was that the West might be able, by a pincer attack from the Black and Baltic seas, to cut off the Russians to the West and be strong enough to prevent them from occupying the territories to the West.

[]
[] The Poles were particularly pessimistic about the outcome if the main battle were joined along the present frontiers in the West. In that case, everyone assumed that the Russians would deport the Polish and other Satellite peoples to Siberia and then proceed to defeat the Western armies unhindered by uprisings in their rear. Soviet peace propaganda had no influence on public opinion. There was such hostility to the Russians, that nothing the Russians said was believed no matter how logical it might sound.

Opinions on China and Guatemala

5. [] while most people were sure that only a tiny percentage of the populations in the European Satellites supported the Communists, it was generally believed that the Communists enjoyed substantial mass support in China. Life was so very, very poor for most people in China that it is assumed they are grateful even for the little order and organization and economic improvement that Communism has supposedly brought them.

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6. The upset in Guatemala did not make a very big impression in Poland, as people had not thought that the government of ARBENZ was completely Communist, in the way that the Polish Government is Communist. the Guatemalan Communist Party's authority had depended mainly on the pro-Communist leanings of President ARBENZ, and that active open anti-Communist parties still existed. Accordingly, the ouster of the Communists from power in Guatemala was not seen as offering any hopeful example of a form of political action open to the anti-Communist Poles.

Armament Production in Poland

7. the 1954 production plan of the factory in Jelcz, as finally approved by the Polish parliament in March 1954, called for the manufacture of approximately 30% less military equipment than in the plan originally worked out and submitted by the Ministry of Highway and Air Transport at the end of 1953. The items produced by the plant were special-purpose trucks -- ambulances, gasoline tank trucks, repair trucks, fire wagons, and so on. The final version of the plan made certain small increases in the output of such equipment for the air force, so that the cuts were all at the expense of the army. Even with these cuts, however, 1954 output will undoubtedly be far higher than last year's output, as in 1953 the factory had been reorganized and had done little actual manufacturing on its own. It had been occupied mainly with the assembling of gasoline tank trucks from chassis imported from the USSR and tanks from East Germany.
8. the reduction in the targets for the Jelcz factory were not being offset by any increase elsewhere. the Jelcz factory was responsible for at least 90% of Poland's production of these particular military items.
9. Another change in the factory at Jelcz noted from late 1953 and thereafter, was a new emphasis given to the manufacture of agricultural machinery and to the production of a variety of consumer goods -- kitchen utensils and the like -- in short supply in that part of Poland. Almost all factories in Poland have for years been required to turn out, as a side line, small amounts of miscellaneous useful items which the workers and their families need and which are hard to find locally. In the past, directives for such side line production had not been enforced, but at the end of 1953 the authorities began to act as if they were really interested in this aspect of the production plan.
10. all of the above changes were made on instructions from Moscow. the Russians had ordered the cutbacks because enormous reserves of military equipment had already been set aside, because war was not expected in the near future, and because the authorities now felt it was more important to concentrate on improving the quality of military equipment than to go ahead turning out still more of the items already on hand in good supply. An acquaintance once told him of seeing an army warehouse filled with hundred of new, unused army trucks in 1951 or 1952 in Elblag, East Prussia, at a time when the Polish army maneuvers in the area were still being carried out with well-worn wartime equipment. even after the downward revision of the plan, war production will still be increasing and the Eastern states will still have an output of military items far in excess of anything in the West. For this reason, the changes were more in the nature of an adjustment of plans to a more realistic assessment of needs and resources available and did not by any means indicate that the Russians intend in the future to take fewer chances of war than they have taken in the past.

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Technical Education in Poland

11. [redacted]
 25X1 [redacted]
 25X1 [redacted] the postwar engineers were as good as the prewar, and that in fact they were astonishingly good considering how much time they had been required to give to irrelevant political indoctrination. The only drawback was that they lacked practice, though this of course was generally made good on the job. They had little direct access to Western European or US techniques, but this was only a marginal handicap. When [redacted] engineers needed to read Western automotive industry periodicals they were able to borrow them from the library of the Highway and Air Transport Ministry in Warsaw. These publications were uncensored. [redacted]
 25X1 [redacted] there were three from West Germany, one from France and one for the US.

Church-State Relations

12. [redacted] in June 1954 the German Catholic priest in the German-speaking village of Dywity, (population from 600-700) near Olsztyn in East Prussia, was transferred to Goldap, a village not far from the Soviet frontier about 100 miles away. No reason was given for the transfer. [redacted] all the German priests in East Prussia, with the possible exception of one or two priests well-known as collaborating with the Communists, were to be shifted about in the summer of 1954. He supposed that the move was designed to weaken the ties between the priests and parishioners, though he had the general impression otherwise that political pressure on the church was somewhat less in 1954 than it had been before.

Polish-Russian Technical Collaboration

13. [redacted] when the Jelcz factory first began production of Soviet-model military equipment (several years before he began to work there), the Russians had provided detailed plans and models of the equipment to be manufactured, but thereafter [redacted] never heard of any case in which the Russians had either provided plans of their own, or asked for plans or designs worked out by the Poles. Groups of Soviet engineers or officers sometimes visited the plant to indicate in general terms what they wanted the plant to do, but the responsibility for carrying out the work was left to the Poles. [redacted] none of the production of the plant went to the Soviet Union, though possibly some of it was delivered to the Soviet army units in Poland. In 1953 [redacted] research and development section received instructions to design a new Polish military ambulance. A new Soviet-made ambulance was supplied as a model, but the factory was also given a number of other ambulances, including a wartime US Dodge, from which design ideas could likewise be taken.
 14. In March or April 1954, a large group of Russian experts visited the factory to inspect the items being manufactured. [redacted]
 25X1 [redacted] in 1955 the plant's output would go to equip the Rumanian armed forces, and [redacted] the Soviet group had come to make certain that the Jelcz plant could qualify for this order.

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15. Though there was thus little or no close scientific collaboration
25X1 between the Poles and the Russians in this industry, [redacted]
25X1 exchanges of technical information and of visits of technicians
25X1 between the Poles and the Czechs were fairly common. [redacted]
25X1 [redacted] a number of Czech engineers had
on several occasions come to Jelcz to give advice on manufacturing
methods.

16. Toward the end of 1943, while on a visit to the Ministry, [redacted]
25X1 [redacted] politically reliable technical experts were being re-
25X1 cruited at very large salaries to go to China. The action was very
25X1 secret, and [redacted]
25X1 [redacted]

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Agricultural Developments

18. [redacted]
25X1 [redacted] in June 1954 the Polish authorities apparently began
25X1 to take a stronger pro-collectivization line toward the peasants.
A collective was finally established at the village of Kiezliny in
the summer of 1954, although until then the peasants had successfully
resisted pressure to form a collective there. Many of the private
farmers had gone into debt to the state for tools, seed, and so on,
and it was these debt-ridden peasants who were finally coerced into
forming a collective. As soon as these few farmers had been so per-
suaded to create a nucleus for a collective, the authorities had
relatively smooth sailing in dragging in others who had held back
when all had held together, but who were too timid or frightened
to make individual refusals.

19. In March and April 1954, [redacted] several cases of people
25X1 working on farms who had asked for permission to go to work in
factories but who were all refused permission to leave agricultural
25X1 work. [redacted] some people who had formerly worked on farms
or who had had advanced agricultural educations had been required to
go back to agricultural work.

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Relations between Poles and Germans

20. [] relations between Poles and Germans were better than they had been for many years. The Poles still distrusted the Germans and the old hate between Germans and Poles remained, but now it had been pushed back into second place by the common hate which both had for the common enemy, the USSR. [] most Poles agreed that Poland would have to give up the so-called Recovered Territories, and that this would be acceptable to the great majority of the Poles so long as Poland would receive back its lands to the East. [] a considerable number of Poles accepted to some extent the Communist propaganda claims that Nazis were now stronger in West Germany than at any time since the end of the war, but that this fact did not make the average Pole dislike the Communist government any less. [] everyone believed that the Russians, and not the Germans, had carried out the Katyn Massacre, but that there was no longer much interest in the question. The Polish public had been brutalized somewhat and had grown indifferent to facts such as these.

Party Developments

21. []
[] many Polish people doubt whether GOMULKA is even alive. In the Ministry of Highway and Air Transport it was believed that the replacement of Hilary MINC as chairman of the State Economic Planning Commission did not mean that MINC had either lost importance generally or had given up his control of economic activities. The shift was regarded as the result of a routine shuffle of jobs among the top members of his hierarchy.
22. [] in general the quality of local Party leaders is very low. [] functionaries below the provincial level were usually quite unintelligent. Party officials in the countryside were incredibly stupid. Many could barely write. Recently, however, with the greater emphasis on increasing agricultural output, the Party has tended to assign more intelligent people to agricultural organizations. This, and the increasing availability of competent, technically-trained people to advise Party leaders in the countryside has resulted in some improvement in the quality of Party activities in agriculture.
23. In industry, too, the quality of persons who are purely Party functionaries is very low. Intelligent Party members prefer work in production, where very high salaries and bonuses can be earned, to straight Party jobs. In [] factory at Jelcz, for example, the director, a Party member, earned from 3,000 to 5,000 zloty or more per month, while the secretary of the factory's Party organization was paid only 1,050 zloty per month. The Party secretary at the factory when Source arrived there in mid-1953 was a former worker who stole and drank heavily, and who neglected his Party work. Only 10 or 15% of the eligible workers had taken political courses at Jelcz, though when the Party was well run, nearly all of the eligible workers were sent to political courses regularly. In the fall of 1953, the secretary took a factory car and wrecked it against a tree. The driver who had given him the car was sent to prison for 2½ years. The secretary was removed from his job, given a one-year suspended sentence, and made head of a small section in the factory administration office with an increase in salary to about 1,800 zloty per month.

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25X1 A new secretary was brought in from the regional secretariat. He
 25X1 increased the number of workers attending political courses, installed
 25X1 Party members as heads of some factory departments [redacted]
 25X1 [redacted] which had hitherto been run by non-Party technicians,
 25X1 and in general did the things active Party organizers are praised for
 25X1 doing. [redacted]

Indoctrination of Youth

24. [redacted] did not believe that the government was succeeding in con-
 25X1 verting the youth of Poland to Communism, but [redacted] did think that the
 25X1 indoctrination had partly succeeded in making the youth less attached
 to the old moral values. People had to work so hard and such long
 hours that they were unable to take care of their children properly.
 The Polish youth was growing accustomed to life under a regime of
 force and violence. This did not make young people satisfied with
 their present life, but it also did not make them very good human
 material for a future better society.
25. The Communist authorities pretended to be very concerned about the
 growth of hooliganism among young people, but [redacted]
 25X1 [redacted] the campaign against hooliganism was not seriously
 25X1 meant. [redacted] the Communists realized that a hooliganized
 youth offered far better human material for a Communist organization
 of society than would a disciplined youth which honored values of
 the older generation. The disorderly behaviour of young people was
 no doubt occasionally inconvenient even to the authorities, but the
 government could afford to take a longer view of the problem. Even-
 tually, the young hooligans would either sober down somewhat or would
 turn into out-and-out criminals. If the former, the government could
 use them to fill the tens of thousands of jobs in the police and
 state apparatus, best performed by selfish, cynical, ambitious men.
 If the latter, the government would use them as forced labor in
 penal camps.
26. [redacted] the authorities tolerated and
 25X1 encouraged the excesses of the youth as long as the hooliganistic
 outrages were practiced on private persons or private property.
 The police looked the other way at the rude, antagonistic behaviour
 of young people, when it was not directed at the police or at state
 property. Seeing this, the general public likewise tried to ignore
 hooliganism as much as possible. Besides, people were afraid to
 interfere with the hooligans because there was always the danger
 that the leader of the group might be the son of a Party secretary.
27. The regime's efforts to indoctrinate young people via the Union of
 Polish Youth (ZMP) had failed badly. The ZMP was very poorly
 organized and had very little influence on young people. Except in
 the schools, the Party had much less success in organizing young
 people's activities than it had with the older generation. The
 degree of success in creating formal organizations for the different
 groups in the population was not important, however, as practically
 all of the organizations of all age groups were only empty frame-
 works for an elaborate make-believe routine which left members and
 organizers alike for the most part unconvinced and unconverted.

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Attitude Toward New Course

28. [] most Poles now expected the standard of living to improve somewhat in the next few years. It is apparent to nearly everyone that much of the initial disorganization and inefficiency resulting from the hasty nationalization of the economy has already been overcome. Consequently, it is now generally believed that the worst point has been reached and passed, and that, if there is no war, there is bound to be some improvement in the standard of living.
29. [] only about five per cent of the population were convinced supporters of the regime and he did not think that the regime, as presently organized and administered, would gain any significant degree of popularity from a modest rise in the living standard. The improvement to date has resulted in a slight increase in people's hopes for the better life, but did not make them reconciled to Communism. In the first place, very few people expected the improvement to be permanent. Prices are reduced with great fanfare one day and silently increased in one way or another on another occasion. People's hopes can only be maintained if the improvement continues without a break. If the improvement stops, the regime will at once lose any good will it may have gained up to that point. Source was convinced that the living standard of Poland would, in the last resort, be determined by the Russians and their international plans, and would in any case almost certainly never catch up with the living standard in the West or even with the best standards achieved in prewar Poland. Accordingly, he felt that there was little likelihood that the New Course would succeed in making the Polish people reconciled to the Communist government.

Forced Labor in Poland

30. About 3,000 of the approximately 4,500 workers at [] factory in Jelcz were political prisoners. The other 1,500 were free workers. Almost all of them were sentenced to terms of at least six years. Prisoners serving shorter sentences were not usually sent to Jelcz, because it was judged uneconomical to spend considerable time training them if they were not likely to keep working at the factory later. The prisoners worked very hard, and the authorities were very successful in getting the best work out of them. Prisoners who made suggestions for improving output or reducing costs were rewarded with reductions in their sentences, and as a result a great many very useful ideas had been obtained for the factory's "racjonalizacji" section from this source.

Sabotage and Resistance Activities

31. There was much talk in the press and public about sabotage, but [] did not think there was any significant deliberate sabotage in Poland. At least, he never saw any signs of it in his factory. The controls on all phases of production were so strict that undetected sabotage or intentional neglect of equipment was not really possible even if anti-Communist workmen were willing to take considerable risks. The only thing remotely approaching sabotage was a certain indifference to the quality of work done. The regime exhorted everyone to pay attention to quality as well as quantity in production, but everyone was under such heavy pressure to increase output that the worker could not afford to give any time or attention to quality, which was accordingly generally much neglected. This indifference to quality of work done so long as minimum standards were met was perhaps in part motivated by a political dislike of the regime, but in the main it was the result of the general apathy and weariness of working people. [] there was, in short, practically no sabotage or passive neglect of production made purely as an expression of political opposition to the authorities.

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32. [redacted] there were practically no underground groups in Poland, but was sure that there were many people who were ready in time of crisis to organize themselves very quickly into such groups. He did not think that there were any anti-Communist partisans now active in Poland, but until 1950 or 1951 there had been

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[redacted]
[redacted] in the woods along the Bielitz-Bemza-Tisz routes. At that time the police were apparently not yet ready to deal with the partisans, for the transport authorities who asked for police protection were advised to route the buses over different roads temporarily.

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